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SIPDIS

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PARIS FOR POL - D'ELIA

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TAGS: [ELAB](#) [SOC](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [KDEM](#) [SG](#)
SUBJECT: SENEGAL'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER STRIKE

REF: A. DAKAR 0588
[B](#). 06 DAKAR 2892
[C](#). 06 DAKAR 1554

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (U) Led by the Confederation of Autonomous Unions (CSA), Senegal's 17,000 elementary school teachers staged a March 20 nationwide "warning" strike. Their objective was to demand equal implementation of a new benefit President Wade granted high school teachers on the eve of February 25 presidential elections. END SUMMARY.

THE BENEFIT

[1](#)2. (U) President Wade gave a "research and documentation allowance" to high school teachers as a pre-election sweetener and to stave off a potentially crippling strike that threatened the baccalaureate exam. This move opened the door to a bigger problem though, as elementary teachers, who were left out of this de facto salary increase, demanded it be applied for all teachers. Since almost all teacher unions support the strike and plans a 72-hour strike March 27-29, the specter again looms of another lost academic year, at least for elementary students.

OVERCOMING DIVISIONS

[1](#)3. (SBU) Teacher unions, even those close to Wade, have joined forces to demand this benefit. While suggesting they may challenge the GOS in court on the issue, CSA President Mamadou Diouf underlined that secondary teachers are in solidarity with their elementary colleagues in support of the strike.

RUMORS INFLATE THE BENEFIT

[1](#)4. (SBU) Meanwhile, Diouf said, many teachers stand to be shocked and perhaps outraged when they find future benefits less than the initial payment. Since the benefit was enacted in February but made retroactive to January, he explained, the first tranche had been approximately USD 100, but succeeding supplements will be only USD [1](#)50. Furthermore, the GOS has cornered the teachers because, hours before implementing the increase, the Finance Ministry's Salary Office Director called Diouf to reveal that the benefit would only be granted as an "additional work time compensation benefit" and that each teacher would have to work an extra three hours per week. In any case, it appears the allowance could be withdrawn at any time.

COMMENT

[1](#)5. (SBU) In a move clearly inspired to boost his reelection campaign, Wade created a way to immediately add to teacher income while working around a carefully negotiated pay scale system. As one religious leader told us, Wade believes "Senegalese are easy to govern when they have money." The pursuit of policies that have

created special benefits to by-pass general salary increases to civil servants has opened the door for more demands by other groups who have yet to benefit.

¶6. (SBU) As noted in Ref A, President Wade's targeted but significant salary increases are adding to Senegal's already serious budget woes. It remains to be seen if, after legislative elections, the National Assembly will have the necessary authority to put an end to this latest wave of pay increases. If not, pay inflation could seriously undermine not only public finances, but also the cornerstone of the Senegalese public service system, namely the popular belief in equal treatment for all. END COMMENT.

¶7. (U) Visit Embassy Dakar's SIPRNet site at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/af/dakar>.

JACOBS